

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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R 141505Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7254
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT,IS
SUBJECT: HERUT CENTRAL COMMITTEE HEARS BEGIN; ELECTS PARTY
OFFICIALS

1. A MEETING OF HERUT'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE WAS CONVENED
YESTERDAY TO ELECT AN ACTING PARTY CHAIRMAN AND A NEW
CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTY EXECUTIVE TO SUCCEED YITZHAK
SHAMIR, NOW SPEAKER OF KNESSET. PRIME MINISTER
BEGIN REMAINS CHAIRMAN OF THE HERUT PARTY, BUT IT WAS
DECIDED TO CREATE THE POST OF ACTING CHAIRMAN IN ORDER
TO RELIEVE HIM OF ROUTINE DIRECTION OF THE PARTY.

2. BEGIN, COMING FROM A SPECIAL CABINET SESSION WHERE
HE RECEIVED UNANIMOUS APPROVAL FOR THE PROPOSALS HE
WILL PRESENT TO THE PRESIDENT CARTER, ADDRESSED THE
CENTRAL COMMITTEE IN THE MOST GENERAL TERMS
ABOUT THE "COMPLETE PROPOSALS" THAT HE IS TAKING TO
WASHINGTON. HE REPORTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN RECENT
IMPROVEMENT IN PUBLIC OPINION, PARTICULARLY U.S.
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PUBLIC OPINION, TOWARD HIS GOVERNMENT AND SAID
THAT THIS WAS BORNE OUT BY "CLASSIFIED MATERIAL"
WHICH HE HAD RECEIVED FROM WASHINGTON.

3. THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING THEN GOT DOWN TO
THE BUSINESS AT HAND. IT UNANIMOUSLY ELECTED MK
MOSHE ARENS AS ACTING PARTY CHAIRMAN AND THEN

CHOSE AVRAHAM SHECHTERMAN CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE. SHECHTERMAN, A VETERAN HERUTNIK WHO SERVED IN THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH KNESSETS BUT FAILED TO MAKE THE LIST THIS TIME, RECEIVED 198 VOTES, WHILE RUNNERS-UP MK MICHAEL DEIXEL RECEIVED 178 AND MK EYTAN LIVNI DREW 128.

4. COMMENT: THE ELECTION OF SHECHTERMAN WAS A SURPRISE. BEGIN AND SHAMIR HAD RECOMMENDED DEIXEL, BUT BEGIN HAD PRUDENTLY AVOIDED LAYING HIS PRESTIGE ON THE LINE IN HIS SUPPORT-- PROBABLY BECAUSE HE HEARD BEFOREHAND THAT DEIXEL'S CHANCES WERE NOT GOOD. (IN FACT, LIVNI HAD BEEN REGARDED BY SEVERAL HEUT INSIDERS WITH WHOM WE SPOKE AS THE FRONT RUNNER. A FACTOR IN SHECHTERMAN'S WIN MAY HAVE BEEN PARTY OPPOSITION TO AN MK SERVING IN THIS SLOT.) DEIXEL'S DEFEAT IS SOMETHING OF A REBUFF TO BEGIN, BUT NOT TERRIBLY SIGNIFICANT. THE POWER WITHIN THE PARTY OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE IS LIMITED. ARENS' NEW POSITION HAS MORE POTENTIAL. ITS IMPORTANCE WILL DEPEND ON WHAT ARENS CAN MAKE OF IT AND WHAT BEGIN ALLOWS. ARENS HAD BEEN UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR ONE OF THE HERUT SLOTS IN THE CABINET, AND MANY FEEL A TRAVESTY WAS COMMITTED IN THE CHOICE OF DAVID LEVY OVER SOPHISTICATED, PROFESSORIAL ARENS FOR A CABINET POST. HOWEVER, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ARENS' APPOINTMENT AS CHAIRMAN OF THE KNESSET'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY COMMITTEE TEN DAYS AGO AS WELL AS HIS ELECTION YESTERDAY GIVES THE AMERICAN-EDUCATED ARENS (MIT, CALTECH) A CONSIDERABLE BOOST IN PARTY AFFAIRS. HE IS A PRIME CANDIDATE FOR A HERUT-CONTROLLED CABINET POST SHOULD ONE BECOME AVAILABLE. LEWIS

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